

Comment to FCC Study 1:

A Comparison of Media Outlets and Owners

For Ten Selected Markets

(1960, 1980, 2000)

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1. On the second paragraph of the executive summary this study highlights, as a main conclusion, that “[c]ollectively, the number of media outlets and owners increased tremendously over the 40-year period from 1960 to 2000.” Later on, the study also concludes that the number of media owners from 1980 to 2000 has been “stagnant.” I believe that, if the purpose of these FCC studies is to assess the effects of de-regulation and consolidation, the data comparing 1980 to 2000 is much more significant than the data comparing 1960 to 2000. Table 1 of the study **only** compares the number of media outlets and media owners in 1960 with 2000; why didn’t the researchers include the comparison between 1980 and 2000? Consolidation and deregulation happened mainly during the 1980s and especially during the 1990s (the Telecommunication Act passed in 1996), so the data that matters are pre and post deregulation.

Why did the researchers chose 1980 and 2000 as comparison points? It would have been much more significant to chose 1995 (before the Telecomm Act) and 2000 (five years after the Telecomm Act). 1980 does not have any significance—that I know of—in the history of deregulation.

The following Table A shows the percentage of increase of media owners from 1960 to 1980 and from 1980 to 2000. Clearly, all ten percentages for 1980-2000 (after the Telecomm Act) are much smaller than the percentages for 1960-1980 (before the Telecomm Act). I have calculated the percentage increase for 1980-2000, which the study did not.

Table A. Percentage increase of media owners in ten markets.

Market	% increase media owners 1960 - 1980	% increase media owners 1980 - 2000	% increase media owners 1960 - 2000
New York City	93%	-2%	90%
Burlington	115	21	162

Kansas	106	0	106
Myrtle Beach	167	44	283
Birmingham	70	12	90
Terre Haute	138	16	175
Little Rock	114	10	136
Charlottesville	100	40	180
Lancaster	60	25	100
Altoona	33	25	67

Table B (below) is a revised version of the study's Table 1. What I have done here is to include the comparison between number of media outlets and media owners from 1980 to 2000. Clearly, the increase in number of media outlets is significantly smaller after 1980 in all ten markets. More important, the number of media owners decreased a great deal since 1980 in all ten markets.

Table B. Summary of media outlets and owner count for 10 selected markets (1960, 1980, 2000).

New York NY		
Market Rank #1		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	89	60
1980	154	116
2000	184	114
% Change '60-'00	107%	90%
% Change 60-80	76%	93%
% Change 80-00	19%	-2%

Burlington VT/Plattsburgh NY		
Market Rank #141		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	15	13
1980	37	28
2000	53	34
% Change '60-'00	253%	162%
% Change 60-80	147%	115%
% change 80-00	43%	21%

Kansas City MO		
Market Rank #29		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	22	16
1980	44	33
2000	53	33
% Change '60-'00	141%	106%
% Change 60-80	100%	106%
%Change 80-00	20%	0%

Myrtle Beach SC		
Market Rank #169		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	6	6
1980	22	16
2000	38	23
% Change '60-'00	533%	283%
% Change 60-80	267%	167%
% Change 80-00	72%	44%

Birmingham AL		
Market Rank #57		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	28	20
1980	44	34
2000	59	38
% Change '60-'00	111%	90%
% Change 60-80	57%	70%
% Change 80-00	34%	12%

Terre Haute IN		
Market Rank #197		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	12	8
1980	26	19
2000	33	22
% Change '60-'00	175%	175%
% Change 60-80	117%	138%
% Change 80-00	27%	16%

Little Rock AR		
Market Rank #85		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	17	14
1980	35	30
2000	60	33
% Change '60-'00	253%	136%
% Change 60-80	106%	114%
% Change80-00	71%	10%

Charlottesville VA		
Market Rank #225		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	8	5
1980	13	10
2000	23	14
% Change '60-'00	188%	180%
% Change 60-80	63%	100%
%Change 80-00	77%	40%

Lancaster PA		
Market Rank #113		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	14	10
1980	21	16
2000	25	20
% Change '60-'00	79%	100%
% Change 60-80	50%	60%
% Change 80-00	19%	25%

Altoona PA		
Market Rank #253		
	Media Outlets	Owners
1960	11	9
1980	19	12
2000	23	15
% Change '60-'00	109%	67%
% Change 60-80	73%	33%
% Change 80-00	21%	25%

2. An interesting piece of data from Table 2 in the study (not shown here) is that two of the ten markets lost their daily owners. In 1980 (before the Telecomm Act), Altoona PA and Myrtle Beach SC had their own locally owned dailies. By 2000 both these markets had lost their locally owned newspapers.

3. I believe the study does not put enough emphasis on the consolidation of commercial radio in all ten markets. Table C (below) compares the number of commercial radio owners in 1980 and 2000 in all ten markets (data extracted from the study's Table 3).

Table C. Number of commercial radio owners in 1980 and 2000

Market	Number of commercial radio owners in 1980	Number of commercial radio owners in 2000	% Increase
New York City	67	41	-38%
Burlington VT/Plattsburgh NY	14	14	0%
Kansas City MO	22	16	-27%
Myrtle Beach SC	11	13	18%
Birmingham AL	24	18	-25%
Terre Haute IN	12	10	-17%
Little Rock AR	20	16	-20%
Charlottesville VA	6	4	-33%
Lancaster PA	5	6	20%
Altoona PA	7	7	0%

According to these numbers, only two of the ten markets—Myrtle Beach and Lancaster—experienced an increase in the number of commercial radio owners. Two markets—Burlington/Plattsburgh and Altoona—did not experience any increase. And six markets experienced a decrease in the number of commercial radio owners (New York City, Kansas City, Birmingham, Terre Haute, Little Rock, and Charlottesville). In conclusion, 60% of the study's sample experienced consolidation of commercial radio.